WHEN TEXAS WAS YOUNG.

Jesse A Ziegler.

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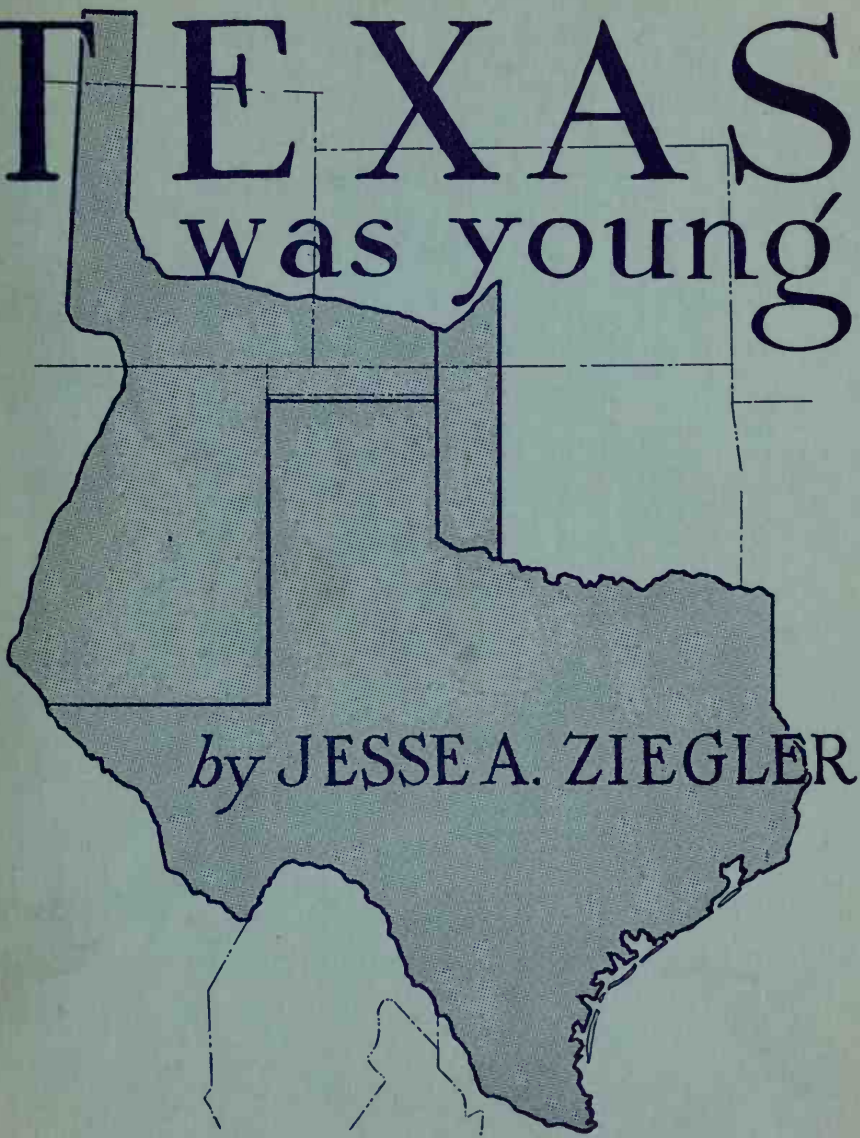


by JESSE A. ZIEGLER

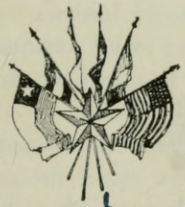
THE BATTLE OF SAN JACINTO

A SURGEON'S STORY

THE "TWIN SISTERS"

REMINISCENCES, PIRATICAL AND REVOLUTIONARY, FROM THE CAREER OF COLONEL WARREN D. C. HALL

When TEXAS was young



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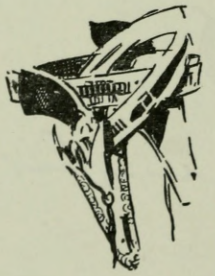


THE PRESENT STATE OF TEXAS, *larger than that of any other state, is still not as large as that originally claimed by the Republic of Texas when it entered the Union in 1845 as the 28th State. At that time Texas claimed title to lands comprising parts of five other states whose boundaries have since been defined as we know them today (see front cover). These states are New Mexico, Oklahoma, Kansas, Colorado and Wyoming. In 1850 the federal government paid Texas $10,000,000.00 to release its claims to these lands.*

The Battle of San Jacinto

Twenty Minutes "which decided the fate of the Texas colonies" and "pointed the way to the Pacific Ocean."

THE TEXAS ARMY, under General Sam Houston, retreated from Groce's Crossing on the Brazos, near Hempstead, toward Harrisburg, then the principal village along Buffalo Bayou. The Mexicans, under the command of General Santa Anna, the President of Mexico, with Generals Cos and Filisola in support, followed the retreating Texans and laid waste the country as they advanced.

With his army in such shape General Houston was in no particular mood to risk an engagement with the superior forces under Santa Anna. Houston realized that one disastrous defeat at the hands of the Mexican army would spell the end of Texas liberty—a liberty not yet won. He, therefore, deferred a decisive contact with the enemy until circumstances were more propitious, hoping meanwhile not only to catch the Mexican forces while they were divided, but also upon a field of battle more suited to the needs of a small army of the particular type that he commanded.

His army was not only small, but poorly equipped, and composed largely of volunteer recruits. Discipline, under the circumstances, was necessarily lax. The recruits came and went, individually, in bodies, according to the demands made upon them from their homes, farms or other affairs; and, sometimes, according to a mood of the moment.

His continued postponement of definite contact with the enemy, by consistently retreating, brought upon him the severe criticism of his compatriots; many of the recruits who left the colors made the oft-repeated comment that they had come to fight, not to retreat! There was even strong talk of replacing Houston as commander in chief of the army.

This was the state of affairs when the Texas army encamped near Groce's Crossing. Here word came that Santa Anna was marching toward Harrisburg with a force estimated at from 1,500 to 2,000 men; and that Generals Filisola and Cos, who were operating in other parts of Texas, with their commands, planned to converge with Santa Anna's command in the coastal region after the three armies had devastated Texas and crushed the rebellion.

IT was Houston's purpose, by leading Santa Anna away from his two supporting Mexican commands, to stake all on a decisive battle and crush him before help could arrive. Yielding, therefore, to the importunities of his men when the news of Santa Anna's approach reached them, the Texas Army immediately broke camp at Groce's Crossing, and on April 18th, 1836, started southward. After a forced march of a day and a half, in which they covered fifty-five miles, the army arrived on Buffalo Bayou opposite Harrisburg. It crossed the next morning.

That evening, however, a dispatch-bearer from the enemy was captured, and it was learned that Santa Anna, with a choice division of Mexican troops, had preceded the Texas Army, burned Harrisburg, and marched toward Lynch's Ferry —now Lynchburg—on the San Jacinto River.

Leaving behind their baggage, the sick, and a sufficient rearguard, Houston's army continued eagerly after the enemy. Only one stop was made, a halt for a brief period on the prairie, without refreshment and the march continued throughout the night of the 19th. Pushing forward at daybreak, Texas scouts encountered those of the enemy and learned that Santa Anna was at New Washington (now Morgan's Point), from whence he intended to proceed, by way of Lynch's Ferry, to Anahuac.

The Texan army, planning to prevent the crossing of the Mexican's moved forward and took up their encampment in a grove of timber adjacent to Lynch's Ferry. This was on the morning of April 20th.

Most of the Texans were doubtless asleep or resting from the fatigue of their forced march of the previous two days and a half. The commissary soldiers, however, were busy slaughtering beeves herded from nearby, Houston and his aides consulting meanwhile over the contemplated plan of attack.

Suddenly the camp was thrown into intense excitement and activity by the approach of Santa Anna's army, which appeared advancing in battle formation against the Texan position. It developed that the Mexican army had been encamped at Clopper's Point, only eight miles below.

The first contact of the opposing armies occurred about noon of the 20th, when the Mexican army, marching in good order, took position on an eminence fronting, and within easy cannon-range of, the Texans. Here they posted their only artillery, a double-fortified brass twelve-pounder (General Rusk, in his report, states that it was a nine-pounder; in the light of subsequent events, the difference is of minor importance!), and deployed their infantry and cavalry on the right, protected by a skirting of timber.

The Mexicans opened fire on the Texan encampment, their cannon in front, infantry on the left, and the cavalry changing position in the course of the firing. Their infantry charged the left wing of the Texans. This charge was promptly repelled by the Texas artillery—consisting of the famed "Twin Sisters," two small brass cannons presented by the ladies of Cincinnati.

Presently the firing ceased. The Mexicans retreated and re-formed in two

small groves of timber. Here they remained, firing in a desultory manner until shortly before sunset, when a move was made to withdraw their forces. Their cavalry and artillery were, in fact, moved to other locations. Colonel Sidney Sherman, in a reconnoitering movement with some 60 or 80 mounted men, advanced toward the Mexican position and charged cavalry, numbering in excess of 100, which came out to meet him. A sharp encounter followed. Sherman lost two men wounded, but none killed, and inflicted substantial losses upon the Mexicans. Their infantry moved forward to support the cavalry, whereupon Sherman's command retired, the Texas infantry moving forward to cover their retreat.

ABOUT 9:00 A. M. of the 21st of April, General Santa Anna was reinforced by the arrival of General Cos with a force of 500 men, who had, without sleep the night before, made a forced march to join forces with Santa Anna before the impending battle. Santa Anna accordingly permitted them to stack arms and go to sleep. Both armies remained poised, therefore, awaiting the final clash.

General Houston determined that the coming engagement should be decisive and that the vanquished, whoever they might be, should have no escape. Accordingly, he ordered Vince's Bridge, communicating with the Brazos and about eight miles distant, to be destroyed. This was regarded at the time as the only means of egress from the field now occupied by the opposing armies. Erastus (Deaf) Smith and his scouts were charged with the destruction of the bridge, and about 4:00 in the afternoon rode in to report that the bridge had been destroyed. This information was received with loud acclaim by the Texans; and amidst a scene of wild enthusiasm. Houston gave orders for an immediate attack upon the enemy. The Texan army now numbered 783 men.

With the addition of General Cos' command, Santa Anna now had some 1500 men, fully equipped. At 3:00 in the afternoon of the 21st, the greater portion of the Mexican army were at rest, having meanwhile thrown up a breastwork some five feet high, with an opening in the middle where their cannon was stationed. It appears that General Santa Anna and a majority of his staff were asleep at the moment.

MEANWHILE, General Houston had ordered the Texan officers to parade their commands and take up the positions assigned them—all of which was sheltered from enemy observation by the woods in which the Texans were encamped. Houston had done well in selecting the site of the battle. As the zero hour—about 4:40 P. M.—approached, the parading Texans were formed for attack. General Burleson's First Regiment was assigned the center. The Second Regiment,

Colonel Sherman in command, occupied the left wing. The artillery, commanded by Colonel Hockley, Inspector General, was stationed on the right of the First Regiment, supported by four companies of infantry under Colonel Henry Millard on their right. The cavalry, 61 mounted men under Colonel M. B. Lamar—afterward President of the Republic—was placed on the right flank; this completed the Texas line. The cavalry was first dispatched to the enemy's left to distract their attention and cover a movement of the main body as it emerged from the timber and moved forward over the open prairie toward the Mexican breastworks and artillery. The Texan artillery now moved up to within 200 feet of the Mexican cannon. Commanding an open view, they immediately opened a brisk fire of grape and cannister.

The reaction of the Mexicans to these movements perhaps can best be gathered from an excerpt from the report of the Battle of San Jacinto by the Mexican Colonel Delgado:

"No important incident took place until 4:30 P. M. At this fatal moment the bugler upon our right signalled the advance of the enemy upon that wing. His Excellency (Santa Anna) and his staff were asleep; the greater number of his men were also sleeping. Of the rest, some were eating; others were scattered in the woods in search of boughs to make shelter. Our line was composed of musket stacks—our cavalry riding bareback to and from water. I stepped upon some ammunition boxes, the better to observe the enemy, and saw that their formation was a mere line and in one rank, greatly extended. In their center waved the Texas flag. (This was the famous battle-flag presented to Colonel Sherman's Company by the ladies of Newport, Kentucky, bearing a figure symbolizing the Goddess of Liberty, and the motto, "Liberty or Death!" It was the only flag used by the Texans at San Jacinto. It now rests in the Capitol at Austin). On both wings they had two light cannons, well manned. Their cavalry was opposite our front, overlapping our left. In this array they advanced resolutely upon our camp, yelling furiously and with a brisk fire of grape, musket and rifle. The utmost confusion prevailed on our side. Generals shouted on first one hand and then another. Colonel Almonte was giving futile orders; some cried out to commence firing; others to lie down to avoid grape shot. Among the latter was His Excellency, General Santa Anna. Already, I saw our men flying in small groups, terrified, and endeavoring to shelter themselves behind large trees . . . all efforts were in vain—the evil was beyond remedy—we were a bewildered and panic-stricken herd. Meeting no resistance, the Texans dashed lightning-like upon our camp, and their unpleasant noises and clamor were heard in close proximity. Then I saw His Excellency running about in the utmost excitement, wringing his hands and unable to give an order. General Castrillon was stretched on the ground with a wound in the leg; Colonel Trevino was killed, and Colonel Aguirre severely injured . . . the enemy had now reached the ordnance train . . . Everything being lost, I went . . ."

And little wonder!

AS REPORTED from the Texan side, Colonel Sherman commenced the attack from the Texan left, but the entire Texan line at the center and right advanced in double-quick time upon the Mexican breastworks, shouting the war-cry, "Remember the Alamo! Remember Goliad!" They received the scattering fire of the enemy and rushed up to within point-blank range before releasing their fire. The hand-to-hand conflict in the breastworks lasted only 18 minutes. Not having bayonets, the Texas riflemen clubbed their muskets, and many of them were broken off at the breech. The rout was complete, as Colonel Delgado has stated, and the pursuit, the Texas cavalry leading, continued until twilight.

A Texan guard was left in charge of the Mexican encampment, while the remainder of the army returned to their own camp, bringing in the killed and wounded. As miraculous as it appears, the Texans lost only two killed and twenty-three wounded, some half dozen of them fatally. Contrast that with the Mexican loss of 638 killed, 208 wounded, and 738 prisoners!

The amount of plunder taken from the Mexicans was immense. It included several hundred horses and mules, six hundred muskets, three hundred sabers, two hundred pistols and nearly $12,000 in specie. Among the staff loss by the Mexican Army there were: Killed, 1 General, 4 Colonels, 2 Lieutenant Colonels, 5 Captains, and 12 Lieutenants; wounded, 5 Colonels, 3 Lieutenant Colonels, two 2nd Lieutenant Colonels, 7 Captains and 1 Cadet; prisoners, President-General Santa Anna, General Cos, 4 Colonels, aides to Santa Anna, and the Colonel of the Guerrero Battalion. General Cos was not captured until April 24th . . .

I retain even yet, in memory, a vivid picture of the Battle of San Jacinto obtained by visiting the Battleground on April 21st, 1884, in company with some 20 of the original veterans of the battle, and Mrs. Andrew Briscoe, daughter of John R. Harris, founder of Harrisburg, and herself one of the early historians of Texas. A reunion of the veterans was being held on the spot where nearly fifty years before those very men had "fought the good fight" and assisted in bringing to birth the Republic of Texas. As we walked up the landing and crossed the grounds at the old Community Cemetery with its monuments, Mrs. Briscoe remarked, "Let me show you where the battle was fought—it was not here, where the graves now lie," and she carried us across the Lynchburg Road, toward the swamp and the timber where Santa Anna was encamped, and to the bogs where many of the fleeing Mexicans were killed or captured.

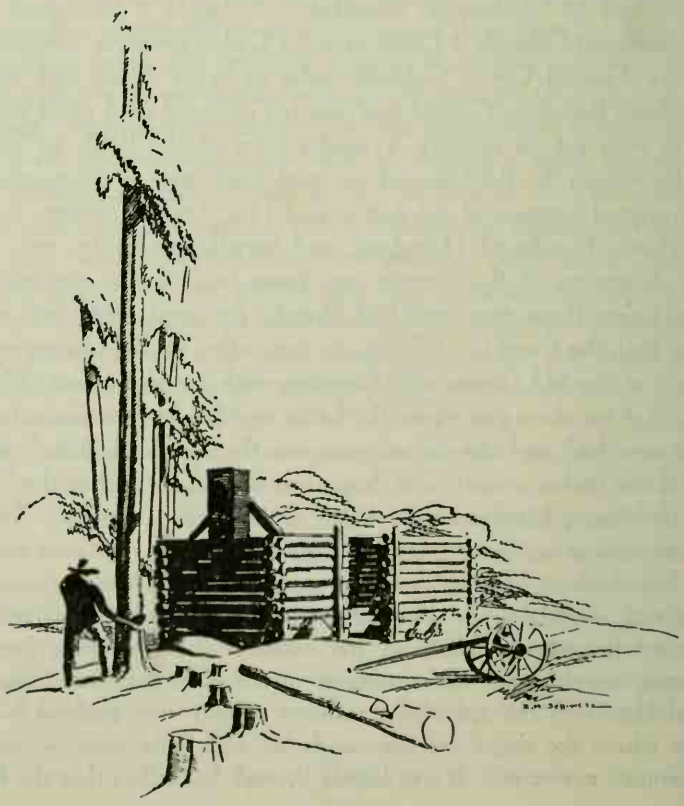
Mrs. Briscoe was not present at the battle herself, but rode over from Harrisburg on horseback at daylight on the morning after. Riding over the entire field on arrival, she had made a careful inspection and learned firsthand from the men engaged the minute details of the conflict. She was quite familiar with the uniforms, trappings and accoutrements of the various ranks of the Mexican Army and also, with the aid of the veterans present, was enabled to designate accurately where the respective commands on each side were encamped, and their subsequent movements. It was largely through her efforts that the first appro-

priation for San Jacinto Park was made, and the present red granite boulders placed as markers.

I recall, subsequently, the visit of Alonzo Steele, last surviving veteran of San Jacinto, to Houston, and how reverently he was entertained at Bryan Hall 71 years after the battle. A splendid portrait of him now hangs in the State Capitol at Austin. His remaining son, Alphonse Steele, yet active in his nineties, is now one of Houston's venerated citizens . . .

IN conclusion, I can only recall the words of Colonel Rusk, in his report of April 22nd, 1836:

"The sun was sinking in the horizon as the battle commenced; but, at the close of the conflict, the Sun of Liberty and Independence rose in Texas, never, it is to be hoped, to be obscured by the clouds of despotism!"



A Surgeon's Story

A kindly doctor whose contributions to Texas liberty should not go unheralded

WHEN the centennial history of San Jacinto is written, the name of Doctor Nicholas D. Labadie should appear high on the honor roll of those who made history on that eventful occasion. He was early an adopted son of Texas and took an active part in the early struggles of the Lone Star State.

Unfortunately, this distinguished doctor of early days has received comparatively scant consideration in the chronicling of Texas history. Seldom have historians mentioned his name; nor was he one to seek publicity or great honor at the hands of the populace and his friends. He bore himself proudly, but was friendly with all. Today, I do not find his name mentioned even in the mortuary rolls of the early pioneers.

Among other items, Doctor Labadie was noted far and wide for his charitable and constructive labor as a man of medicine. Particularly was this true during the cholera, small-pox and yellow-fever epidemics. In the treatment of the latter disease, he was an internationally known authority. During the course of his medical career, he must have ministered to literally hundreds of individual cases without hope of remuneration. His reward, his compensation, he found in the doing of the deed.

The records indicated that Dr. Labadie was born in Windsor, Canada, on December 5th, 1802, both parents being of French extraction. His early life was spent on the Canadian frontier, his education being quite meagre until he came to the United States. Here, as both his parents were devout Catholics, he entered the missions and became an assiduous student for the priesthood. History does not tell why he did not eventually enter the priesthood; possible he only sought the splendid education afforded the neophytes of that order. The record does indicate, however, that in 1827, when he was twenty-five years old, he began the intensive study of medicine in St. Louis, defraying his expenses by clerking in a store. Graduating in medicine, he later went to Fort Jessups in Louisiana, where his first professional calls were made.

It was while engaged in his practice at Fort Jessups, that Dr. Labadie heard of Texas and its many advantages. Succumbing to the lure of frontier pioneering, he mounted his horse and rode westward to Nacogdoches, Texas, the chief place between the Louisiana line and San Felipe, then capital of Austin's colonies.

Delivering his letters of introduction to Colonel Piedras, the Commandante of Nacogdoches, he received assurance of the good will of the Mexican government, and within the course of a few days proceeded to San Felipe. Here he met and was entertained by many prominent men of the colony, and was introduced to the Father of Texas, Stephen F. Austin.

WITH the friendly encouragement of those in authority in Texas, Dr. Labadie now made a trip on horseback to New Orleans, where he provided himself with a supply of medicines and such professional equipment as was in those days available. Returning to Texas, he was employed by Colonel Bradburn as surgeon to the Mexican garrison stationed at Anahuac, consisting of some 300 soldiers. Here he met and married Miss Mary Normant of Mississippi, also of French extraction.

When the Mexican invasion of Texas occurred, Dr. Labadie, who was a close follower of the politics of the day, cast his lot with the Texans, and enlisted in Captain William M. Logan's Company, Second Regiment of Texas Volunteers, upon its organization in Liberty County on March 11th, 1836. He reported with his company to General Sam Houston at Beason's Ferry on the Colorado river on March 20th. He was absent from the main army, scouting with a company of volunteers under Captain Karnes, when Houston's retreat to San Felipe began. Rejoining the army while it was encamped at Groce's Ferry on the Brazos, he was appointed by General Sam Houston on April 6th, 1836, Surgeon of the First Regiment of Regulars. In this capacity he was in charge of the medical chest and supplies, carried in an ox-wagon during the retreat.

Comparatively few outside of Texas know the detail of the Battle of San Jacinto, an eighteen-minute conflict regarded by many historians as one of the decisive battles of the world. Certainly, it was one of the most decisive and far-reaching battles ever fought on American soil. Nor do I find, in the accounts related by these historians, much mention of Dr. Labadie's participation therein, a participation that presents a most interesting side-light on the incidents of the battle itself and what followed on the next day.

Dr. Labadie's own story of these incidents was given directly to my father and me. He was our family physician for many years; and while I was only a child at the time, the details of his story remain to this day vividly impressed upon my memory. Because of their undoubted accuracy in point of detail, and also because of their distinct bearing upon items that were given us as facts by later historians, I feel it my duty to present them to the public.

IN the Battle of San Jacinto, Dr. Labadie fought throughout as a volunteer in Captain Logan's Company, which occupied that portion of the left wing of the army commanded by General Sidney Sherman. After the battle ended, he acted as Surgeon to the army, and at the request of General Sam Houston attended

the wounded Mexicans left upon the field or brought in as prisoners; he received the highest praise of Houston for the excellence with which he handled the assignment.

Because the account tallies in all respects with that which the Doctor has, at various times, related to my father and me, I give below excerpts from an address the doctor delivered before the Press Association of Texas:

"While I was engaged attending the wounded Mexican prisoners, a Mr. Sylvester (this was Lieut. Sylvester of Cincinnati and Newport, Ky., who received from the ladies of Cincinnati the famous battle-flag of Texas) rode up to the prisoners' 'Square' accompanied by a Mexican who refused to enter the corral. They being at a loss how to proceed, as neither the sentinel nor Sylvester spoke Spanish, I was called upon to interpret. I told the Mexican that this was the place where all the prisoners were kept and that, accordingly, he should enter. Demurring, however, he replied, 'I want to see General Houston . . . is he in camp?' 'Yes,' I rejoined, 'General Houston is in camp,' and turning to Sylvester, I continued, 'Take this man to yonder oak, where General Houston lies,' at the same time pointing to the small grove of oaks designated.

"As they departed in the general direction of Houston's couch, the prisoner whose wounds I had been treating—a Mexican lieutenant—arose to a half-sitting position and whispered to me, 'Esta el Presidente!' (That is the President!) Electrified with surprise, I immediately folded my instruments, excused myself and quickly followed after Sylvester and his charge. Advancing, I met Colonel Hockley advancing, who called to me, 'Come quickly! You are wanted at General Houston's couch.'

"Arriving there, I found General Houston lying on his back under the great oak, resting from his wound which had just been dressed. On Houston's left, sitting on a wooden chest, was the prisoner, General Santa Anna. He politely returned the salute which I accorded him as I came within the circle, and I said to him in Spanish, pointing to Houston, 'This is General Houston . . . do you wish anything of him?' Santa Anna replied, 'Please say to General Houston that General Santa Anna stands before him, a prisoner.' Upon my repeating this to Houston, the latter seemed very much surprized, and turning on his left side, exclaimed, 'General Santa Anna, upon what condition do you surrender yourself?'

" 'A prisoner of war,' replied Santa Anna, and continued, 'Whilst I was on the public highway, I met two of your soldiers, to whom I surrendered myself a prisoner of war.'

" 'Well,' said General Houston to me, 'tell General Santa Anna that so long as he shall remain within the boundaries (of camp) that I shall allot him, I will be responsible for his life.' (The world today knowns how well General Houston kept his word, notwithstanding both the immediate and subsequent difficulties encountered in carrying out that promise. In this connection, it is, in fact, interesting to note in passing that General Houston was a Mason, as was also General Santa Anna reputed to be.)

"Upon translation to him of General Houston's promise as above, Santa Anna's countenance brightened perceptibly, and he responded, 'Tell General Houston I am tired of war and bloodshed; that I have seen enough of this country and its citizens to know that the two peoples cannot live under the same laws, and I am willing to treat with him as to the boundaries of the two countries.'

"In reply, General Houston said, 'Tell General Santa Anna that I cannot treat with him, but that the Texas cabinet, now in Galveston, will make a treaty with him.'

"At this point in the conversation, the soldiers crowding around began pressing against us to the point that the interview was interrupted. They appeared greatly agitated and cries were heard, 'Remember the Alamo!' 'Remember Goliad! Kill him! kill him!'—and the guards had to step in and force the crowd back.

"At this juncture Colonel Hockley appeared with young de Zavalla to serve as official interpreter, and I returned to my wounded prisoners who meanwhile had been taken across the bayou to the Zavalla place, now converted into a hospital."

It should be noted that the foregoing scene as depicted by Doctor Labadie is further confirmed in the letter of Moses Austin Bryan written to General Sherman, in which the writer states that he was present and saw General Santa Anna seated on a black box when he made his speech; and that Bryan himself, cooperating with young de Zavalla, acted as interpreter during a portion of the conference, until General Almonte was sent for to act as interpreter for Santa Anna.

IT appears, in the further conference, that Santa Anna proposed to put an end to the war by ordering General Filisola out of Texas. General Rusk, however, intervened at this point in the conference to suggest that "Filisola will not obey any order issued to him by Santa Anna, as he (Santa Anna) is a prisoner of war and has no right to command." Santa Anna replied, in effect, that the army was so devoted to him they would obey any order given by him. General Rusk then said: "Then issue an order to General Filisola to surrender as a prisoner of war," to which Santa Anna replied with spirit, "I shall do nothing that would be a disgrace to myself or to my nation," and he did not give the order. As a matter of fact, Filisola had under his command at the time a force far superior to the Texas force.

One historian relates that General Santa Anna was much exhausted mentally and physically after his capture, and asked for a dose of opiate which was given to him.

According to Doctor Labadie, the reason that General Santa Anna was not recognized by Sylvester and others at the time of his capture, was due to his change, after the battle, from customary attire. When captured, Santa Anna wore a glazed cotton cap, a striped jacket, volunteer round-about, country-made cotton socks, soldier's coarse white linen pants bespattered with mud. What gave rise

to suspicion, however, was his fine linen shirt and sharply pointed shoes. These latter did not correspond with a common soldier's dress.

At the de Zavalla place, pressed into service as a base hospital, Doctor Labadie relates that conditions were pitiful. Medical supplies were lacking, and bandages for dressing wounds were almost nil. Anxious to retrieve anything that could be used, the Doctor searched through the immense pile of plunder recovered from the battlefield. There he found quantities of beeswax and tallow, and a large number of sheets. The former he used for making salve, while the latter were torn into strips for bandages. While engaged in the work of salvage, Colonel Handy making an inventory at the time, certain of the Texas soldiers were examining a Mexican pistol. It accidentally discharged and the ball grazed Colonel Handy's chin and felled him. The wound, however, proved not dangerous.

Acting under orders from General Rusk, Doctor Labadie, a few days after the battle, started for Galveston. Stopping en route at Anahuac to visit his family he discovered that during his absence his little son had died, one of his houses had burned, and his wife and remaining children were without the necessities of life. To aggravate the situation, Doctor Labadie himself immediately became taken with a severe illness resulting from sustained exposure prior to the battle, and the long hours of work afterward. He remained delirious for more than a week, his mental and physical suffering was intense, and produced a marked deafness which afflicted him to the end of his days.

AFTER his recovery, the doctor moved to Galveston, where he built one of the first frame houses on the island. Opening a drug store, he continued for many years the leading druggist. In 1859 the yellow-fever carried off thousands, among them the doctor's brave little wife. It was at this time he became a leader of the Howard Association (forerunner of the present Red Cross) a national organization of which my father was also an active member. The two of them worked night and day to administer to the sick and dying.

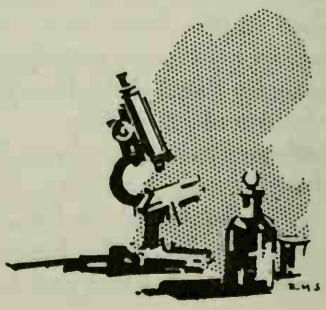
Doctor Labadie took the initiative in building the first Catholic church in Galveston, and with his own hand planted the first tree on the lot. Correspondingly, he was the first to respond with a subscription to build the Charity Hospital. In addition, he built and operated a line of schooners to Pensacola, Florida, and constructed the wharf on 27th Street, known as the Labadie Wharf. While his infirmities prevented him from serving actively in the Civil War, he was a member of the Medical Examining Board of the First Texas Brigade, and served faithfully at home with the families of our soldiers.

Doctor Labadie later married Miss Agnes Rivera. His only son, Joe Labadie, was my boyhood friend.

The splendid life of the doctor was brought to a close on March 13, 1867. His grandson, Philip C. Tucker, of Bradonton, Fla., sent me some months ago a photograph of Dr. Labadie that was used by the artist Huddie when painting

for the State the magnificent oil painting now hanging in the Senate Chamber at Austin, depicting Santa Anna's audience with General Houston. Oddly enough, this painting shows the figure of Dr. Labadie in the clothes he was wearing *when the photograph* was taken! Yet, the Doctor's name does not appear on either the legend accompanying the painting, or any of the lithographed copies made from it—reference being made, on some copies, only to "The Surgeon." Thus does history reward its deserving son! In still other copies of the painting, it is indicated that the doctor attending General Houston in the picture is Dr. Alexander Ewing, Chief Surgeon of the Texas Army—a fine and noble man, whose remains now rest in the Old City Cemetery adjoining Sam Houston Park in Houston.

I HAVE no desire to take issue with the Artist Huddie, nor even yet with the Senate Committee who purchased and had the painting hung at great cost to the state; but, historically, and to fall into modern vernacular for the moment, that painting "is all wet!" The artist, most certainly, was misinformed. Dr. Labadie stated also to the State Medical Board exactly what is stated here: that he was not at General Houston's couch, but in a distant part of the field, attending Mexican prisoners, when General Santa Anna was first led into the presence of Houston, and the latter was lying on a couch of Mexican blankets; that he—Dr. Labadie—followed Sylvester to Houston's camp and arriving there, found Santa Anna seated on the box, and not the "surgeon," albeit the face of the surgeon seated on the box in the painting shows that likeness of Dr. Labadie (in outline) that I now have and which was previously given to the artist from which to paint. It is my belief that history should be accurate in every possible detail. Deaf Smith is shown in a buckskin suit. Two days previously, however, he had discarded it and forced a Mexican, who he had captured, to exchange his uniform with him which he wore during the battle. History tells us that the Texan army was dressed in deerskin and homespun, and that they had not changed clothes for three or four days. Consequently, Dr. Labadie's white shirt and modern style vest as shown in the painting, appear to me to be absurdly out of place!



The "Twin Sisters"

What became of the Famous Bronze Cannon used at San Jacinto?

RECENTLY an article from the Centennial Committee appeared in the *Dallas News*, asking for information that might lead to the present whereabouts of the famed "twin sisters," the two small bronze cannons presented to the Texas Revolutionists by the ladies of Cincinnati, and used by General Houston and his army as the main battery of the Texans at San Jacinto, contributing largely to the defeat of the Mexicans. The article in the *Dallas News* stated that the last information about these two cannons indicated that they had been thrown into the bayou at Harrisburg during the War between the States to prevent their capture by federal forces.

That statement, I believe to be in error, because I remember seeing them quite often at the Galveston Artillery Hall about the year 1874. They were brought there to assist in celebrating San Jacinto Day. It should be remembered that the San Jacinto veterans, at that time, could not travel far . . . transportation was meagre. Consequently, Houston and Galveston took turn about in acting as host and each city afforded the veterans much entertainment and celebration on these occasions.

Undoubtedly the "twin sisters" remained for some time in Houston after the battle of San Jacinto. Dr. S. O. Young, before his death, stated that, as a boy he had often seen the two brass cannons around the market house in Houston; that after the election of General Sam Houston as Governor the second time, they were brought out on the green near the bayou and one was fired; but when they turned to fire the second gun, they found it spiked. On account of his stand against secession, General Houston had many enemies, and it was believed that someone politically opposed to him had played the trick of spiking the gun.

Just how or why these "twin sisters" were removed from Houston, or when their removal occured, very careful research has failed to reveal. In any event, they next came to light in Louisiana, nearly thirty years after the Battle of San Jacinto; and thereby hangs the tale of how, eventually, they came back to Galveston, where, as a young man, I frequently saw and came to know them.

After a series of misfortunes, General Sidney Sherman had removed his home to Galveston, where he owned and operated the Island City Hotel. In 1861,

he was requested by the Galveston Committee of Safety to take charge of affairs at Galveston, with full authority to put the island in a state of defense. It was while he was Commandant that the famous "twin sisters" were presented to Texas by the Governor of Louisiana, and delivered to General Sherman at Galveston. Originally the "twin sisters" were mounted on low wheels and highly polished. When cast, they had silver or some bright metal on them, as they shone and sparkled beautifully. Just above the vents was the inscription: "Presented by the Ladies of Cincinnati," in letters in Roman style. The Governor of Louisiana, so history states, before returning them to Texas, had the two cannons placed in complete repair—new wheels, carriages, and highly polished. The following is from a letter written to Governor Moore of Louisiana by Sidney Sherman at Galveston, April 23rd, 1861:

> "In concluding, Governor, allow me, as an old San Jacinto man, to return my thanks for the handsome compliment your State has paid Texas in returning to us the 'Twin Sisters' newly mounted and equipped. We cannot forget a gift rendered in a manner as generous as it is appropriate. The 'Twin Sisters' are already in active service."

IT seems appropriate to digress just here to relate that in the Battle of Galveston, January 3rd, 1863, General Sherman's eldest son, Lieut. Sidney A. Sherman, was in charge of and directing the fire of the "twin sisters," when he was mortally wounded by a shot from the gunboat "Harriet Lane." Hardly more than a boy at the time, the wounded officer, breathing his last, looked up at those kneeling over him and murmured: "Break this gently to my mother . . . and . . . tell my father . . . I fell beside my gun!"—words that later became an inspiration for poems by the noted Texas writer, Molly E. Moore. His heart-broken mother died in 1865. General Sherman followed her in August, 1873, and was laid by the side of his old friend, David G. Burnet, in Magnolia Cemetery. The remains of both were later taken to Lake View Cemetery at Galveston.

Mere child that I was, the passing of Lieut. Sidney A. Sherman left a vivid picture in my mind. Standing on the sidewalk in front of my home, I witnessed the passing of his remains, en route to his beloved mother's home across the bay, and not far from the field of San Jacinto. There she had waited and listened with beating heart to the cannonading from the Battle of Galveston, during the course of which her son had died. His father bore the loss of his son with outward stoicism; but, inwardly, I doubt that he ever fully recovered from the blow.

Certainly the "twin sisters" remained in Galveston for many years, because I recall seeing them there eleven years later. Mr. John Sloan, manager of the Maxwell House Coffee Company, agrees with me—positively states he saw them in the Galveston Artillery Hall as late as 1906. Subsequently, I was told on various occasions that they had found their way to a junk-yard and were sent north and melted, on account of the scarcity of brass. This is possibly the true story of their

disappearance, as apparently everything possible has been done for years to locate them. Many inquiries have been made concerning them. One report has it that they were thrown into the flats at Virginia Point on Galveston Bay. If so, that incident undoubtedly occurred subsequent to 1874, and there would appear to be no good reason for the act that would now substantiate the report. Certainly, also, various searching parties have explored the Virginia Flats from time to time in an effort to locate the cannons but without success. I am told, in fact, that the historian, Clarence Wharton, at one time offered the sum of $500 in cash to anyone who recovered the "twin sisters."

ANOTHER story concerning their disappearance relates that the "twin sisters" were sent to Washington and placed in a national museum. Dr. S. O. Young, however, traced this story and found that the cannons were never received in Washington.

It is peculiarly interesting to note, however, that Governor Frank Lubbock, in his memoirs, refers to the "twin sisters" as "Iron Guns"; and, as a matter of fact, it has developed that there really were *two* sets of "twin sisters": the famous ones of bronze or brass, presented by the ladies of Cincinnati, and two "iron" guns presented to the Army of Texas by General Chambers, for whom Chambers County is now named. These two iron pieces were formerly displayed on the Capitol grounds at Austin, just opposite the old Land Office, and were viewed by thousands of visitors who innocently supposed them to be the original "Twin Sisters" from Cincinnati. On the wheels of these cannons at Austin, however, was a plate with the inscription: "Presented by General Chambers."

Now—were there one or two sets of "twin sisters" at San Jacinto? An inspection of the military records of that day do not reveal that there were four cannons. Turning, however, for example, to the report of the Mexican Colonel Delgado, on the conflict at San Jacinto, he says that he "mounted a pile of ammunition boxes to observe the movement of the Texans, and saw that their formation was a mere line—in one rank and long extended. In the center was the Texas flag. On both wings there were two light cannons, well manned, and the army was advancing furiously." Does Delgado mean, as his statement sounds, that there were *two* cannons on *each* wing, or only one cannon on each wing?

I have always honored with much reverence the two brass cannons I have seen in Galveston as the original "twin sisters"; but if the two iron pieces presented by General Chambers were also in the Battle of San Jacinto, I want, likewise, to do homage to them.

THE two brass cannon were presented in Newport, Kentucky, where Colonel Sidney Sherman had organized a company of fifty men, uniformed, equipped and supplied them with ammunition and food, and arranged for their transport to Texas, to serve under General Houston against the invading Mexicans. There is

no question that the two cannons were brass, as Major Ike Stafford and his brother, Colonel Manor Stafford, Henry Thompson, and O. S. Cochran verified this fact, and all of them had frequently seen the original "twin sisters"; too, General Sherman accepted them as brass cannons from the Governor of Louisiana.

After his arrival in Texas, Colonel Sherman was made Major General of the Texas Militia, succeeding General Rusk. The night before Colonel Sherman and his company of volunteers left Cincinnati for Texas, they were given a farewell ball at the home of one of the leading citizens. It was here that they were presented with a beautiful battle flag by the ladies of Newport, Mrs. Sherman herself making the presentation. The flag was of blue silk, bordered with gold fringe. On it was painted a female figure, symbolizing the Goddess of Liberty, and the legend, "Liberty or Death!"

As they were about to take their leave, Ensign James Austin Sylvester—the same who later brought General Santa Anna in as prisoner to General Houston's camp—approached the daughter of their host and asked that she give them some memento of the occasion to take with them as good luck. Removing her dainty white glove, she replied, "Here, Sir, is a gage of battle—let it be borne always in the foremost of the fight!" The gallant ensign bowed low and said: "I take it as a pledge of victory and shall die before I surrender it to a foe!" He affixed it to the top of his standard, where it was borne in the thickest of the fight at San Jacinto. The little white glove was looked on as a symbol of victory by the whole army. It remained on the flag staff throughout their long journey to Texas, on to Gonzales, back across Texas and into the Battle of San Jacinto, where it was lost. Though many searches were made for it, it was never found.

The battle flag was the only color carried by the Texans at San Jacinto. Some time after, when Colonel Sherman returned to Kentucky on a mission in behalf of the Republic of Texas, he carried with him the revered flag, and the following note:

"War Department, Velasco, Texas, Aug. 6, 1836.

This stand of colors, presented by the ladies of Newport, to Captain Sidney Sherman, is the same which triumphantly waved on the memorable battlefield of San Jacinto, and is by this Government presented to the lady of Col. Sherman as a testimonial of his gallant conduct on that occasion.

(Signed): A. Somerville, *Secretary of War*

Approved:
David G. Burnett"

The flag now rests, mounted as a painting, behind the desk of the Speaker of the House of Representatives at Austin, having been presented to the State by Mrs. J. M. O. Menard, Mrs. W. E. Kendell, and Mrs. Lucy Craig, daughters of General Sherman, in 1896; it is now one of the most highly prized relics of the State.

AS to the famous "twin sisters," I feel that I have a double interest in them; not only because they assisted in defending and liberating the land of my birth, but also because, presented in Cincinnati, they sprang from the same source from whence came my American forebears. It was at Cincinnati that my paternal grandfather finally ended his voyage from Havre, France, in 1826—ten years before the Battle of San Jacinto—when my father was only three years old.

There remains open, however, one question that should be settled: Were there two sets of "twin sisters" at the Battle of San Jacinto—the bronze or brass from Cincinnati, and the iron guns presented by General Chambers? It now seems that *both* sets have been lost. Can we not bring to light at least one of the two sets?

Reminiscences, Piratical and Revolutionary, from the career of Colonel Warren D. C. Hall

Lawyer, soldier, planter
—friend of Jean Lafitte.

IN THE annals of the revolutionary period of Texas, the history of no man taking an active part in the glamorous incidents of those days dates farther back than that of the distinguished Colonel Warren D. C. Hall. Prior to the advent of Stephen F. Austin, with whom he subsequently became well acquainted, Colonel Hall enjoyed a cordial friendship with the then far-famed and swashbuckling pirate, Jean LaFitte, known as the "Buccaneer of Campeche," who in 1816-17, had his fort and stronghold on the end of Galveston Island. Here Colonel Hall frequently visited the colorful pirate chieftain and the two doubtless held "high wassail and good sport," albeit the Colonel, of course, held no personal interest in the other's piratical procedures.

Commissioned to practice law in Natchitoches, La., in 1817, Colonel Hall instead became a captain in Magee's Expedition. After the Battle of Ressito, and the murder of the prisoners by Delgado, Colonel Hall, with a number of the American prisoners, escaped and returned to the United States along with General Autry, thus avoiding the subsequent and disastrous Battle of Medina fought by the reorganized American forces—and the later fatalities occurring among the remainder of that army who continued under Mina, or attempted to return by land with Perry.

In due course, Colonel Hall became a resident of Matagorda in 1828. While here, he became actively interested in Austin's colonies, and in 1835 he was one of the Committee of Safety serving at Columbia. This led to further governmental appointments of distinction.

While General Rusk was absent with the Texan Army in 1835, Colonel Hall was Acting Secretary of War under President Burnett, and in that capacity lent able assistance to the revolution.

He was the one who issued the famous "order in council" that almost resulted in the City of Galveston becoming host to the victorious army of Texas.

General Houston had been retreating slowly—perhaps in some instances not so slowly!—before the oncoming, superior force of Mexicans under General Santa Anna, President of Mexico, and the forces of other Mexican generals converging to meet the latter. Houston had been hesitant in his movements, debating the choice between a further retreat, a move forward to attack the enemy, and a decision to stand and await the attack that he anticipated from the Mexican army then on the Brazos. History now records, of course, that General Houston did retreat to the reaches of San Jacinto and there awaited the attack of the Mexicans under Santa Anna, with the result as known.

For a few days after San Jacinto, however, the effect of the battle upon the superior forces commanded by the Mexican General Filisola was unknown to Houston and the Texas cabinet. It was feared for the moment that these forces might meet and crush Houston's army in retaliation for the defeat of Santa Anna, thus undoing what already had been accomplished in behalf of Texas liberty.

Accordingly, on April 26, 1836, Colonel Warren D. C. Hall issued his famed order as follows:

"General Sam Houston, San Jacinto:

"If you consider it inexpedient to risk a further engagement with the enemy, and regard a retreat from the position you now occupy as inevitable, you are hereby directed to march the army under your command to the nearest available mainland point adjacent to Galveston Island, giving information of such move to this Department, and transportation will be made available to carry your command and its equipment to the Island.

"(Signed): Warren D. C. Hall, Acting Secretary of War."

THERE was at the time no bridge connecting Galveston with the mainland, and had Houston moved his army for the purpose mentioned, they probably would have proceeded to Virginia Point or some like designation and received transportation via ferry. As it was, the defeat of Santa Anna, his imprisonment and his immediate orders to General Filisola resulted in an about-face by that general and his forces, and a rapid retreat beyond the boundaries agreed upon between Santa Anna and the Texas cabinet. Today, consequently, few people know how nearly Galveston came to playing host to the triumphant Army of San Jacinto.

The capture of Santa Anna, and the foresight of General Houston and the Texas Cabinet in holding the famed "Napoleon of the West" a prisoner of war, forestalled the need of accepting Galveston's hospitality. In fact, when Colonel

Hall's order was received by General Houston, the army of Filisola had crossed the Colorado and were fleeing toward the Rio Grande.

In the early days, there was, at the west end of Galveston Island, a ferry to San Luis Pass, connecting with stage service direct to the plantations adjacent to Brazoria and Matagorda. Accordingly, Colonel Hall acquired ownership, in that section, of the China Grove Plantation, eventually one of the most historic sugar and cotton plantations of the Old South, and subsequently noted as the home of that illustrious son of Texas, General Albert Sydney Johnston. The General often remarked that the happiest days of his life were spent on this plantation. It had derived its name, "China Grove," from the many chinaberry trees planted by Colonel Hall for shade purposes. General Johnston's residence stood on the prairie near Bonney, a point on the old Columbia Tap Railway.

After Texas was annexed to the United States, General Johnston again entered the service of the U. S. Army and was given a command on the Pacific Coast. Remaining in service until Texas withdrew from the Union, he resigned his commission and, with a number of others released at that time, came overland to Texas. Here he was placed in command of the Confederate Army in Tennessee, serving gallantly until the Battle of Shiloh, when—with victory in his grasp—he received a mortal wound and died. His body now rests in a shrine at the State Cemetery at Austin, the beautiful work of Texas' distinguished sculptress, Elizabeth Ney.

WHILE early ownership of China Grove plantation rested in Colonel Hall, he maintained his residence on the West End of Galveston Island, at "Tres Palacios"—three trees—and resided there at the time LaFitte had his fort there. The pirate did not remain for long. General Long, who had built his fort in 1817 across the bay at Bolivar Point, visited the pirate chief, induced him to acquiesce in a governmental order of ouster. In recognition of his compliance, as the General and his wife departed from the Island on their final visit to LaFitte, the latter and his men burned the little village of Campeche, destroyed the fort, and a few days later sailed quietly away for parts unknown. Thus passed into history one of the most colorful, cavalier and glamorous types of pirate chieftains the world has ever known. Doubtless he was second in prominence only to the famous Captain Kidd, and most certainly far less bloodthirsty. One recalls with a turn of appreciation the sincerity of LaFitte's gallantry where a beautiful and cultured woman was concerned, and his bravery and effectiveness when he, with his men, cooperated with General Jackson in defeating the British at New Orleans, an act for which General Jackson, when he later became President of the United States, issued a full pardon to LaFitte.

It is told of LaFitte that when he finally departed from Galveston Island he stood upon the deck of his vessel somewhat apart from the others and murmured, as he glanced longingly toward the Island, "I have buried my treasure at the 'three trees'!" Some years after, one of his crew, in company with others, returned to the

spot and with picks and shovels dug deeply into the soil around the trees. Presently they came upon a large cedar chest bound with metal bands. Unearthing it and breaking the locks, they found—not the gold and silver bullion and jewels constituting the "treasure" of which LaFitte had spoken, but the remains of his beautiful creole wife who had died and been privately buried the day before LaFitte had sailed.

PROCEEDING, however, with incidents relating to the life of Colonel Warren Hall: It so came about that Colonel Hall was the trainer of Stephen F. Austin, then a warm friend, in the latter's duel with Colonel John A. Wharton. Hall told Austin that his only chance was to get the first shot and make it effective. Otherwise, he would be a dead man, as he—Hall—regarded Wharton as a "dead shot." Austin trained accordingly, and in the duel did fire the first shot, his bullet striking Wharton in the right arm, below the elbow. The pistol fell from Wharton's hand, and thus ended the unfortunate affair, an affair that Austin often deeply regretted. Wharton's arm remained stiff and it was necessary that he learn to use his left for both writing and fighting. He lived, however, to be one of the most courageous fighters at San Jacinto, and died in Houston in 1837.

After the revolution, Colonel Hall turned actively to the operation of his China Grove plantation. Among other items which long existed there and which I can recall from early youth, he planted a windbrake of Cherokee wild roses and Bois d'Arc that provided a beautiful landscape effect and wafted a perfume on the breeze. The land consisted almost entirely of rich bottom soil. The sugar house and other industrial outhouses were constructed of brick, and the residence itself of prime lumber. Here Colonel Hall would come regularly from his home in Galveston to supervise the plantation, traveling sometimes by steamboat through the intercoastal canal, or by ferry and stage, or occasionally on the Columbia Tap Railway, some 14 miles out of Houston and then known as the "Sugar Baron's Road."

On one of his visits to China Grove, a number of recreant Mexicans took the house by surprise, forced their way into the great dining room where Colonel Hall was eating his breakfast and attempted to kill him. They would have succeeded had it not been for his bodyservant, "Old Tom," who came to his master's rescue by wielding the heavy dining room chairs as clubs, thus affording Hall an opportunity to get his gun.

I mention the above to illustrate the attachment and loyalty of the average slave for his master. Would Old Tom, the slave, have risked his life to save the master, had Colonel Hall been the type of "brute" pictured by the abolitionists of the North? Never in the world! Had such been true, undoubtedly the slave would have rejoiced in the opportunity thus provided for the Mexicans to murder Colonel Hall. As it was, Old Tom never left his master. Even after freedom came to the slaves, he remained with Colonel Hall until the latter's death, and was remembered by his master with a good home and a hundred acres on Galveston Island, thus

evidencing in turn the attachment of the master for the slave. I was only a boy at the time, but I still retain a clear vision of the two of them as, quite often, they rode together on the way to the farm.

Colonel Hall spent his last days at his place called "Three Trees" on Galveston Island—the original "Tres Palacios" of Jean LaFitte—and died there in 1869.

HISTORY tells us that shortly after Jean LaFitte took up his quarters at Campeche, he was besieged by a large band of the Coronkaway Indians (there are many variations of the spelling of the name of this once powerful, savage and greatly feared tribe), who resented LaFitte's presence in their domain and proposed to drive him from the Island. In the battle at Tres Palacios which followed—a peculiarly bloodthirsty and brutal affair, because of the cut-throat pirates on the one side, and the giant-statured, cannibal Indians on the other!—LaFitte, after losing seven of his own men and inflicting a loss of sixty killed upon the Indians, drove them in hard-pressed flight from the Island. They never returned, and today this once powerful tribe of giant cannibals, feared in their day by both White and Indian alike, is entirely extinct. History's last mention of them records that the straggling remnant of the tribe, beaten and broken, finally crossed the Rio Grande and took their way into the deep mountain fastness of Old Mexico, where intermarriage with the wild mountain tribes of those parts finally obliterated the race.

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